

class of duly qualified teachers for the supply of these schools—and though some improvement has been effected by the voluntary efforts of the people themselves in the matter of school-houses and of the emolument of teachers, that improvement has been confined to a few of the more favoured and advanced localities, whilst the general condition of our common schools, both in point of quantity and quality, has been retrograding instead of advancing. If then, a sound and an efficient system of common school education constitute the basis of all national intelligence, industry and morality, surely it is high time that we bestir ourselves, and, calmly yet earnestly, enquire what, in present circumstances, can and ought to be done. To me, it appears plain and palpable that, whilst many things may and ought to be done for the removing of clamant defects and putting us on a career of high and ennobling progression, there is one thing lying at the bottom of the whole, without which all other remedial measures will prove of comparatively little avail,—I refer to the method of supporting these schools by compulsory assessment, giving effect to the principle ‘*that the property of all should be taxed for the education of all.*’ This, in my opinion, forms the grand specific for the removal of many of the ills under which we are at present labouring, as well as for the diffusion of a more healthful spirit throughout our educational system; and, in this respect, I believe, I have the sympathy of a large majority of my fellow-provincials. At all events, I am perfectly satisfied that the time has now arrived, in the history of Nova Scotia, for putting this point to the test, and ascertaining the amount of support you are prepared to give it. For this end, I have felt it my duty to forward to the different localities forms of petitions to the Legislature, in its behalf. Should these petitions receive the signatures of the greater proportion of the intelligence and influence of the province, I have little doubt that the Legislature will give the subject their immediate and careful consideration. If, on the other hand, they do not, I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of feeling that I have rid my conscience of no ordinary load of responsibility, and shall crave the liberty, in time to come, of laying the continuance of our present educational defects and blemishes, not at the door of the Legislature, but at your own.

That there may be no misapprehension or dubiety as to the way of carrying out the above mentioned principle, I may state, that whilst I would not hesitate for a moment to assume the obligation of raising the whole sum required for the maintenance of our Common schools by direct taxation, being persuaded that such a course would operate most beneficially for the accomplishment of the grand object contemplated—the universal education of the young—yet I scarcely think that the Province is ripe for